

## Pacific F2000 Round 9 Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca September 2, 2017



### Malibu, Ca 9/6/17 For Immediate Release

On Friday, September 1, when the Pacific F2000 series competitors rolled in to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca for practice and qualifying, they were greeted by uncharacteristic high temperatures and humidity. On this short, twisty track with steep uphill straightaways, engine cooling would be crucial. Entering this event, there was a tie for the lead of the championship between Tim deSilva and Tom Hope. DeSilva was unable to attend, having a prior commitment to race at Goodwood in England. Also, third place points earner Bob Negron was missing, having blown a motor in July during a non points event at Laguna Seca. This gave renewed hope to Canadian driver Mitch Egner. After qualifying, the order for Saturday's round 9 was set. Starting first would be Egner, who was .8 secs clear of second place Tom Hope. Third place on the grid would go to the newly invigorated Scott Vreeland. Fourth place would go to rookie Jason Reichert. The third row of the grid would be filled by Paul Rodler on the inside, and another Canadian, Gavin Aitken on the outside. On the inside of the fourth row would be Peter West, with Jeffrey Pietz on the outside. Inside the fifth row would be Troy Tinsley, leader of the National class for Pinto engined cars. Outside of the fifth row would be Lynn Greenhill. Farther back would be William Jordanov in the National class followed by another National class entry for Paul MacFarlane. Starting last due to a mechanical problem in qualifying would be Paul Marino. Nick Kodenko was missing altogether, having blown a motor in practice.

Saturday dawned even hotter, and still very humid. This would prove to be a challenge for drivers, crews, corner marshalls and even spectators as the day wore on. At one point the

temperature topped 112 degrees fahrenheit. As the green flag flew over the field to start Round 9, Mitch Egner edged away from Hope, with a tremendous battle ensuing behind them for third place between Jason Reichert and Scott Vreeland. This position was resolved when the veteran Vreeland made a bold move around the outside of the rookie Reichert in the off camber turn three. As the gap began to widen between Egner, Hope and Vreeland, there was a full course caution for a crash in turn nine involving Aitken and Pietz. Gavin Aitken had a tire lose pressure in the very fast, downhill turn nine, causing him to do a half spin. Jeffrey Pietz valiantly tried to miss Aitken, but could not avoid hitting him. Aitken's weekend was ended on the spot, however Pietz's PR1 Racing team headed by Bobby Orgel was able to get Jeffrey's car repaired in time for the second qualifying session later in the afternoon. After three laps behind the pace car the green flag flew again. On the restart Mitch Egner got a good jump, while behind him Jason Reichert left a gap to Scott Vreeland, perhaps in an effort to get a bit of a run. Sadly for Reichert, this strategy was not effective and he was a second behind the veteran at the line. A couple of laps after the restart, sixth place Peter West got into turn five a bit too hot and lost the rear end on exit, leaving the track into the dirt. There was no damage, and West regained the track having lost several positions. With only four laps remaining there was suddenly drama, as both leader Egner and second place Tom Hope developed misfires. Vreeland was in position to take advantage to pass the slowing Hope for second place. Reichert saw his opportunity for his first series podium finish and started putting on a charge to overtake Hope. The wily Hope was able to hold off the youngster by .8 secs at the start finish line, however. One of the real stars of the weekend was Paul Marino. After starting at the back, Marino {who is a rookie and Tom Hope's teammate at HM Motorsports) came all the way up to finish in fifth place. Sixth place was Paul Rodler. National class drivers Troy Tinsley and William Jordanov came across the line less than a second apart. Lyn Greenhill was ninth, followed at some distance by a disappointed Peter West in tenth. Paul Macfarlane was the last of the cars running at the finish.

Despite the difficult conditions, the racing was really good with battles right through the field. Congratulations to Mitch Egner for scoring a Grand Chelem (pole, lead every lap and fastest lap). Congratulations also to Troy Tinsley for another victory and extending his lead in the National class.

This season the Pacific F2000 Championship series is included in the Mazda Road to Indy USF2000 \$200,000.00 Scholarship Shootout. The winner of the knockout style shootout will be provided with a \$200,000.00 Mazda Scholarship to enter the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda in 2018 - the first rung in the Mazda Road to Indy ladder sanctioned by INDYCAR. The Mazda Road to Indy is the only driver development program of it's type in the world offering a clear, scholarship-funded path to the Verizon IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis 500. The Pacific F2000 series has a rich history and includes among it's alumni drivers J.R. Hildebrand, 2011 Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the Year and current driver of the #20 Ed Carpenter Racing Indy Car, and Dane Cameron, Weathertech series Prototype and GTD Champion, Pro Mazda Presented by Cooper Tires 2016 runner-up Patricio O'Ward, current Pro Mazda driver Nikita Lastochkin and Yufeng Luo, who also won the SCCA Championship in FC in 2016 and is currently driving in the Pirelli World Challenge.

**Round 9 Qualifying:** 1) Mitch Egner 1:28.483, 2) Tom Hope 1:29.270, 3) Scott Vreeland 1:30.388, 4) Jason Reichert 1:30.892, 5) Paul Rodler 1:32.024, 6) Gavin Aitken 1:32.032, 7) Peter West 1:32.629, 8) Jeffrey Pietz 1:33.123, 9) Troy Tinsley 1:33.523, 10) Lyn Greenhill 1:34.663, 11) William Jordanov 1:36.668, 12) Paul MacFarlane 1:39.267, 13) Paul Marino no time, 14) Nick Kodenko no time

**Round 9 Race Results:** 1) Mitch Egner, 2) Scott Vreeland -3.034, 3) Tom Hope -6.449, 4) Jason Reichert -6.529, 5) Paul Marino -11.821, 6) Paul Rodler -25.988, 7) Troy Tinsley -29.865, 8) William Jordanov -30.618, 9) Lyn Greenhill -36.646, 10) Peter West -54.433, 11) Paul MacFarlane -64.227, 12) Gavin Aitken -11 laps, 13) Jeffrey Pietz -11 laps, 14) Nick Kodenko DNS